

From: Speedy
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 12/14/01 2:42am
Subject: Microsoft must be punished.

Briefly, the views expressed are similar to those in this article:
<http://www.linuxplanet.com/linuxplanet/opinions/3952/1/>
This is where I saw the need to contact you regarding this issue.

To Whom it may concern.

I wish to express my concern at the unjust "penalties" that Microsoft has been offered. The anti-trust case has proven the company to be trading in a way to retain a monopoly, and this is now where the penalties are to be given. Instead, they have been offered compromise after compromise, without having to compromise themselves.

I am not a resident of the US, but rather of Australia. Thus, I offer this email as an opinion of a resident of the internet. As a part of the Linux community. As a person with enough technical insight to understand what needs to be done in the industry to benefit both sides. I am disgusted at the way the US DoJ has handled this case, after it was already proven but yet to be settled. I am disgusted even more at the backflip done by the Bush administration to not punish a criminal, as was found in the courts of the Clinton administration. I won't even go into the evidence that Microsoft had pumped a lot of money into Bush's campaign. This is not about politics, but about justice and the IT industry.

I am not a lawyer, and I am not a Microsoft user. How many messages supporting Microsoft will be from normal users? Not many, I would assume. But why would Microsoft need users to write in with bad spelling and grammar, when they can pay lawyers to write full dissertations which are littered with Latin?

Microsoft has it's place in this world, and a decent agreement would benefit them, as well. It would force them to write more secure and stable systems, while allowing others (Linux, FreeBSD, and all the other free and proprietry Operating Systems) to be a choice for the end user. When I buy a computer, I hate the fact that I often have little to no choice about software. I can buy pieces and build my own, but if a large chain was offering a system for a budget price, why am I then forced to buy Window's with it? I could save another hundred dollars and have it loaded with Linux. Or with nothing at all, leaving it up to me to choose (there's that word again). But only if Microsoft is forced to comply with the law.

We need at least three items dealt with:

1) Any remedy seeking to prevent an extension of Microsoft's monopoly must place Microsoft products as extra-cost options in the purchase of new computers, so that the user who does not wish to purchase them is not forced to do so. This means that for the price differential between a new computer with Microsoft software and one without, a computer seller must offer the software without the computer (which would prevent computer makers from saying that the difference in price is only a few dollars). Only then could competition come to exist in a meaningful way.

2) The specifications of Microsoft's present and future document file formats must be made public, so that documents created in Microsoft applications may be read by programs from other makers, on Microsoft's or other operating systems. This is in addition to opening the Windows application program interface (API, the set of "hooks" that allow other parties to write applications for Windows operating systems), which is already part of the proposed settlement.

3) Any Microsoft networking protocols must be published in full and approved by an independent network protocol body. This would prevent Microsoft from seizing de-facto control of the Internet.

As to the point about Microsoft needing to remain as it is for "National Security"? HA! Ask the NSA what operating system they recommend. Better still, here is the address you may find the information:

http://freshmeat.net/redir/selinux/7258/url_homepage/

(NSA Security-enhanced Linux is a set of patches to the Linux kernel and some utilities to incorporate a strong, flexible mandatory access control architecture into the major subsystems of the kernel. It provides a mechanism to enforce the separation of information based on confidentiality and integrity requirements, which allows threats of tampering and bypassing of application security mechanisms to be addressed and enables the confinement of damage that can be caused by malicious or flawed applications. It includes a set of sample security policy configuration files designed to meet common, general-purpose security goals.)

Why would a company, who have hijacked an entire industry and created their own "standards" without allowing others to use those standards (case in point: Word documents), be more secure than one whose standards are open? Any attempt by Microsoft to say otherwise should be regarded as fraud, or at least contempt. After all, what would happen if the "security" was, at some point, compromised? Would Microsoft take responsibility? I doubt it.

Thank you for letting me participate in this decision.

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